

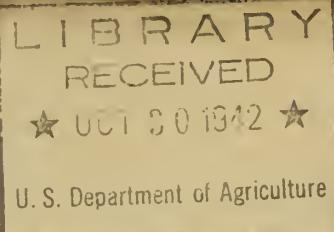
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TRANSPORTATION AND CITY MARKETING PROBLEMS



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During the past few months appeals have been made to farmers to increase their production of many commodities which are needed by our own people and our allies. In many cases these farmers are working hard to get this increased production in the face of what sometimes seem like insurmountable obstacles. Some of them have found their supply of fertilizer curtailed. Many are unable to get the required labor, and, therefore, they and members of their families must work extremely long hours. Often they have been unsuccessful in obtaining as much equipment as they would like, but in spite of all these problems the farmers are going right ahead meeting the production goals that have been set up and taking every step possible to make sure that an adequate supply of food and fiber exists for us and the United Nations. Although the American farmer does not object to doing his part against heavy odds, he has a perfect right to expect his products to be efficiently handled after he has produced them. He insists that just as he is leaving no stone unturned to produce these products, so the rest of us should see that nothing interferes with their speedy and efficient movement to the places where they are needed.

From the standpoint of national welfare, it is absurd to produce large quantities of commodities that cannot be distributed. Products piled high on the farms do not help farmers nor feed people in distant

cities or armies overseas. Therefore, our consumers, military forces, and our allies are just as much concerned with streamlining our distribution methods as are our farmers. For these reasons it seems imperative that we reexamine, in the light of the present emergency, some of the rules and regulations affecting the transportation and handling of farm products that have grown up during peace times when we did not have to be so particular about the efficiency of these operations.

First, let us examine a few rules and regulations that interfere with efficient transportation. It seems obvious that in these times we cannot afford the luxury of imposing regulations on motor truck operations which have the effect of decreasing the efficiency of this method of transportation. With larger quantities of all products to be moved, our transportation system in its entirety--railroads and inland waterways as well as trucks--is going to be taxed to its capacity. We cannot afford to have any restrictions which bring wasteful use of our transportation facilities. Several regulations interfere with the efficient operation of our motor truck transportation system. Without naming the places where these regulations apply, I would like to illustrate by pointing out three or four regulations which impede truck transportation, and leave the subject with the suggestion that the proper authorities of each State consider whether or not the State has these or other restrictions which should be removed for the duration.

In some parts of the country truck movement from one area to another is interfered with by the necessity of obtaining license tags or other permits in every State through which the truck operates. In a few

instances it is necessary to write in advance and receive a permit before a truck can cross the State line. In others the operator, on entering the State, must proceed directly to some prescribed place and get a permit. The mere lack of uniformity in the regulations makes it difficult for the trucker to know what requirements he must meet. There is no occasion in this connection to go into the question of the propriety of having trucks pay their fair share of taxes, but it is important that these taxes not be levied in such a way as to interfere with or delay the movement of products from one area to another. Burdensome registration and permit requirements for every separate State through which a motor line passes have a tendency to hamper truck movement to the detriment of this method of transportation.

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But more serious than the registration and permit requirements of the various States is the lack of uniformity of laws regulating the size and weight of trucks and their equipment. Every State in the Union has established limits on the weight of motor vehicles permitted to operate over its roads, but there are tremendous variations in the limits that have been set. We all know of instances where trucks hauling large loads must detour a particular State because of its very low load limit, or as an alternative unload half of their cargo and proceed through this State on two trucks, only to reload on one truck after they have left the State. Some States require equipment on a truck that is illegal for the truck to carry in an adjoining State. This lack of uniformity in regulations on weights, sizes, and equipment is a serious barrier to the efficient operation of motor truck transportation. Somehow, at least during this

emergency, we must find reasonable uniform requirements that can be applied rather generally. The standards of weights and sizes just suggested by the Public Roads Administration ought to provide a good basis for eliminating the non-uniformity of regulation among the different States. If some connecting road is unable to carry a reasonable load, concerted action might be taken to improve such a road so that it will not constitute an impediment to truck movement. In other words, unreasonable restrictions on sizes and weights of trucks, as well as on type of equipment required, should be suspended, and some uniformity should be sought so that there will be no interference with transportation that is so important to the war effort. Progress has been made in establishing uniform speed limits. By the same method we can now go a long way toward establishing more uniformity in regulations of weights and sizes.

In the program which will soon be put into effect to make the present tires and trucks last as long as possible, emphasis will be placed on maximum utilization of each truck. Farmers, dealers, and truckers will be asked to pool their operations, avoid duplication of routes and circuitous routing, and eliminate insofar as possible the movement of partially loaded trucks. Full loads will be sought in each direction. We must be sure that there are no legal barriers to the successful operation of this conservation program. When our tires and trucks are gone, many products cannot be moved. We cannot afford to hasten this dilemma by continuing restrictions that are wasteful.

Port of entry laws must not be so administered as to require movement over indirect routes or to cause excessive delays. Federal and State

regulations which tend to prevent trucks from obtaining a backhaul, or return load, lead to wasteful practices and in the opinion of the Department of Agriculture should be repealed. Regulations which cause trucks to move over indirect, longer routes when mileage could be saved by traveling over some more direct road should be modified. Adjustments should be made, when necessary, so that haulers can engage in pooling operations or enter into reciprocal arrangements.

In these times, when we simply do not know where additional supplies of trucks and tires are coming from, it is hardly an over-statement to say that it is almost a life-and-death matter that we use our existing truck equipment as efficiently as possible. We cannot throw the load to the railroads because they have all they can handle. The trucks must continue to operate. Therefore, we must modify any regulations which have the effect of decreasing the efficiency of use of our limited supply of truck equipment.

Although restrictions on the movement of products by rail are not so numerous as restrictions on trucks, we should also make certain that rail transportation is not burdened by unnecessary and out-moded laws. For instance, in times like these, when we can get additional quantities of locomotives only with great difficulty, should unreasonable limits be placed on the number of cars that can be pulled by any one engine? In one State it is claimed that last year it was necessary to run 4100 extra trains because of a limit on the number of cars to a train. As labor becomes more and more scarce, we may need to give attention to requirements which make it necessary to provide each train with a crew of a

certain number of men regardless of the need for that number to perform the operation. With shortage of labor, shortage of materials, shortage of transportation, and the necessity to move products--farm products as well as others--in ever-increasing quantities from one part of the country to another, we must take every step possible to see that every method of transportation we have operates at the peak of efficiency. Surely none of us would be any more willing to sabotage our war effort by impeding the transportation of our products than we would be slowing down the production of planes, guns, or food.

But not all the interferences with the free movement of food lie in the field of transportation. After many foods reach the large markets, their movement is delayed and their handling made inefficient by other restrictions. However, these restrictions on handling through the markets usually differ in one important respect from those imposed on transportation. Restrictions on transportation are usually imposed by law, while barriers to efficient handling through the markets are usually set up by private groups in order that they may profit at the expense of the public. These restrictions in the markets exist because of the absence of laws to break them up or because of failure to enforce the law.

Some wholesale markets--particularly for perishables--prohibit the handling within their facilities of products brought in from outside the State. The use of other markets is denied to products arriving by truck. There are markets located on some particular railroad, or controlled by one railroad company, that are not open for handling supplies brought in by other railroads or by truck. Restrictions of this type force dealers

to operate in several places, make it necessary to haul products from one market to another, force buyers to go to several markets to obtain a complete line of supplies and tend to prevent proper flexibility in transportation. Invariably these conditions delay the movement of products and lead to excessive capital investment, unnecessary labor, and wasteful use of trucks and other equipment. No railroad or other group should be permitted to build and operate a public market facility without opening such a facility to supplies arriving by all methods of transportation and from all States. To do otherwise is a restraint of trade and a burden on interstate commerce.

Unnecessary handling is forced upon many city markets by combinations of truck owners and by some organized bands of workers. In at least one city buyers are not permitted to enter a market with their trucks to load their produce, but must pay unwanted truckers \$30 per car-load to bring their purchases to their waiting trucks just outside the market area. In another city wholesalers operating their own trucks are not allowed to leave their own merchandise on their own trucks overnight, but must unload it even though the same merchandise is to be reloaded on the same truck the next morning.

Farmers and truckers entering a city with a load of produce have been forced to hire special drivers to drive their trucks into the market and hire special unloaders when they already had sufficient men on the truck to do the job. Against the will of receivers minimum units of sale have been forced on a market so that the products would have to move through another market to be sold in smaller lots to the buyers. It is

literally true in some of our cities that wholesale operators are not allowed to streamline their handling methods but must retain antiquated methods and pay for useless operations because of outside pressure.

The Department of Justice has tried to break up such practices as these, but under the present interpretation of the Federal statutes has found itself without authority to do so. Therefore, it seems that the States and the Federal Government will have to assume the responsibility for new legislation to cope with these problems.

In times like these we must use every piece of transportation equipment to its capacity. We can afford no wasted labor and no unnecessary handling. Our whole task of distribution must be streamlined if we are to handle the largest quantity of products this nation has ever produced with our limited supply of equipment and man power. Every restriction which interferes with our doing the job must be removed. Restrictions imposed by law should be modified. Restrictions imposed by private groups seeking their own gain at the expense of their country's welfare cannot be tolerated. Let us reexamine our laws and regulations, change those which interfere with the task we have to do, and enact others to break up practices of groups which would sabotage our war effort for their own immediate gain. We have but one task to perform, and that is to win this war. Nothing must be allowed to stop us.

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